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COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

July 1, 2025

Claire Shipman
Acting President
Columbia University
202 Low Library
535 West 116th Street
New York, NY 10027

Dear Ms. Shipman,

The Committee on Education and Workforce (Committee) is continuing to investigate antisemitism at Columbia University (Columbia), including whether there was or is a hostile environment against Jewish students on Columbia's campus and whether the university is fulfilling its obligation under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* (Title VI) to end any harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent any harassment from recurring.¹

Throughout the Committee's investigation, Columbia has continued to be plagued by antisemitic harassment.² The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has launched three separate investigations into antisemitic discrimination on campus.³ In May, the Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education found that Columbia had acted with deliberate indifference toward the severe and pervasive harassment faced by Jewish students at the

¹ These investigations, including the questions listed below, will inform the Committee's consideration of whether there is a need for legislative reforms to protect Jewish students and end discriminatory appointment and hiring practices on college campuses.

² See, e.g., Ed., *Meet the Columbia Students Arrested for Occupying Butler Library. Plus, Pence Talks Harvard and Trump with Beacon EIC*, Wash. Free Beacon (May 10, 2025) <https://freebeacon.com/newsletters/meet-the-columbia-students-arrested-for-occupying-butler-library-plus-pence-talks-harvard-and-trump-with-beacon-eic/>; Riya Mahanta, Jaya Shankar, & Kimberly Wing, *CUAD Launches Sit-In at Barnard's Milstein Library, Declares Building the "Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya Liberated Zone"*, Barnard Bull. (updated April 1 at 2:27 PM), <https://www.thebarnardbulletin.com/post/cuad-launches-sit-in-at-barnard-s-milstein-library-declares-building-the-dr-hussam-abu-safiya-lib>.

³ See Isha Banerjee, *Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Opens Investigation Into Barnard for Discrimination Involving Shared Ancestry*, Colum. Spectator (March 25, 2025 at 9:50 PM), <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2025/03/25/department-of-education-office-for-civil-rights-opens-investigation-into-barnard-for-discrimination-involving-shared-ancestry/>.

university.⁴ Columbia officials have also repeatedly made shameful statements about the plight of Jewish students on campus, raising questions about their willingness or ability to comply with Title VI.⁵

As antisemitism continues to rise across the United States, it is critical that our institutions of higher education have leaders who firmly understand and carry out their obligation to protect Jewish students.⁶ The Committee is therefore seeking clarity regarding several messages you sent that appear to downplay and even mock the pervasive culture of antisemitism on Columbia's campus. Obtaining clarity on these statements will aid the Committee in considering whether potential legislative changes, including legislation that specifically creates further accountability for campus leaders, are needed.

On October 30, 2023, you wrote to then-president Minouche Shafik and stated, "people are really frustrated and scared about antisemitism on our campus and they feel somehow betrayed by it. Which is not necessarily a rational feeling but it's deep and it is quite threatening."⁷ Your description—that people feel "somehow" betrayed and that this is "not necessarily a rational feeling," but that it is "threatening"—is perplexing, considering the violence and harassment against Jewish and Israeli students already occurring on Columbia's campus at the time.⁸

On January 17, 2024, you said, "We need to get somebody from the middle east [sic] or who is Arab on our board. Quickly I think. Somehow."⁹ Were Columbia to act on this suggestion and appoint someone to the board specifically because of their national origin, it would implicate Title VI concerns.¹⁰ The Committee's request for clarification will inform its understanding of Columbia's compliance with Title VI and current approach towards discrimination in appointments. In addition, this statement raises troubling questions regarding Columbia's priorities just months after the October 7th attack, which was the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

⁴ See Press Release, *HHS' Civil Rights Office Finds Columbia University in Violation of Federal Civil Rights Law*, Dep't of Health and Human Services (May 22, 2025), <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/ocr-columbia-violates-federal-civil-rights-law.html>.

⁵ See, e.g., Eliana Johnson, '*No Specific Memory*': Columbia University's Armstrong Tells Feds She Can't Recall Specifics of Any Anti-Semitic Incident on Campus, Wash. Free Beacon (April 6, 2025), <https://freebeacon.com/campus/columbia-universitys-armstrong-cant-recall/>; Eliana Johnson & Aaron Sibarium, *Columbia Administrators Fire Off Hostile and Dismissive Text Messages, Vomit Emojis During Alumni Reunion Panel on Jewish Life*, Wash. Free Beacon (June 12 2024), <https://freebeacon.com/campus/columbia-administrators-fire-off-hostile-and-dismissive-text-messages-vomit-emojis-during-alumni-reunion-panel-on-jewish-life/>.

⁶ See U.S. Antisemitic Incidents Skyrocketed 260% in Aftermath of Attack in Israel, According to Latest ADL Data, Anti-Defamation League (updated 01.17.2024), <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/us-antisemitic-incidents-skyrocketed-360-aftermath-attack-israel-according>.

⁷ Message from Claire Shipman, Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr., to Minouche Shafik, Colum. Univ. President (10/30/2023, 8:56 AM) (on file with the Committee as Columbia-HCEW-00024867) (hereinafter "Shipman Message I").

⁸ See, e.g., Ben Wilson, *Israeli Columbia University Student Assaulted While Putting Up Posters of Hamas's Hostages on Campus*, Wash. Free Beacon (October 12, 2023), <https://freebeacon.com/latest-news/israeli-columbia-university-student-assaulted-while-putting-up-posters-of-hamass-hostages-on-campus/>.

⁹ Message from Claire Shipman, Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr., to Mark Gollogly, Vice-Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr. (1/17/2024, 10:57 AM) (on file with the Committee as Columbia-HCEW-00057533) (hereinafter "Shipman Message II").

¹⁰ The Committee also has general concerns regarding discrimination in hiring. Hiring an employee, including a university professor, simply because of their national origin would likely be a violation of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*.

In another communication on December 28, 2023, you stated: “The piece was pretty amazing given the moment. Headline terrific... And most critically I think it heavily inoculates us for a while from the capital [sic] hill nonsense and threat.”¹¹ Your reference to “capital [sic] hill nonsense” is disturbing given Congress’s role in conducting oversight to ensure universities are fulfilling their obligations to protect Jewish students. Congress’s efforts to ensure the safety and security of Jewish students—who make up almost a quarter¹² of your campus population—is not “capital [sic] hill nonsense.”

In the same December communication, you stated, “I do think we should think about . . . how to do some things with Rashid [Khalidi]. Events. That won’t be popular in some groups but he is a respected academic.”¹³ We agree. Columbia further promoting Rashid Khalidi, an individual who has consistently supported and excused terrorist violence—and served as spokesman for a designated terrorist group—would likely not have been “popular” with most Jewish students, who felt and continue to feel fear and hostility on campus after the October 7th attack.¹⁴

Finally, in multiple communications, you expressed distrust and dislike for Shoshana Shendelman, a Jewish member of Columbia’s Board of Trustees and one of its most outspoken members against the bullying, harassment, and intimidation of Jewish students. In a communication on January 25, 2024, you said of Shendelman, “I just don’t think she should be on the board.”¹⁵ In another communication on April 22, 2024, Wanda Greene, vice-chair of the Columbia University Board of Trustees, asked you—referring to Shendelman—“do you believe that she is a mole?” She added, “A fox in the henhouse?” You agreed, stating, “I do.” Greene added, “I am tired of her.” You agreed, “so, so tired.”¹⁶ These exchanges raise the question of why you appeared to be in favor of removing one of the board’s most outspoken Jewish advocates at a time when Columbia students were facing a shocking level of fear and hostility.

The Committee therefore requests clarifications on the attached correspondence, including answers to the following:

- a. Please clarify what you meant by the fear of antisemitism “not necessarily” being a “rational feeling,” and that it was “quite threatening”?¹⁷

¹¹ Message from Claire Shipman, Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr., to Minouche Shafik, Colum. Univ. President (12/28/2023, 11:00 AM) (on file with the Committee as Columbia-HCEW-00056591) (hereinafter “Shipman Message III”)(You also stated in this exchange, “Also. I loved the last quote from the head of Hillel. We need to embrace people like him”).

¹² See *Top 60 Colleges by Jewish Population*, Hillel Int’l (last visited 6/30/2025), <https://www.hillel.org/top-60-jewish-colleges/>.

¹³ Shipman Message III, *supra* note 11.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Daniel J. Roth, *Columbia Prof. Says Isarel Advocates Will ‘Infest’ Trump Administration*, Jerusalem Post (updated January 19, 2017 22:53), <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/columbia-prof-says-israel-advocates-will-infest-trump-administration-478993>; <https://martinkramer.org/tag/rashid-khalidi/>.

¹⁵ Message from Claire Shipman, Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr. (1/25/2024, 11:12 AM) (on file with the Committee as Columbia-HCEW-00043910) (hereinafter “Shipman Message IV”).

¹⁶ Message from Claire Shipman, Chair of Colum. Univ. Bd. of Tr., to Wanda Greene (4/22/2024, 11:12 AM), (on file with the Committee as Columbia-HCEW-00074359) (hereinafter “Shipman Message V”).

¹⁷ Shipman Message I, *supra* note 7.

- b. What did you mean by, “[w]e need to get somebody from the middle east [sic] or who is Arab on our board. Quickly I think. Somehow”?¹⁸
- c. Please clarify what you meant by, “capital [sic] hill nonsense.”¹⁹
- d. Please detail what you meant when you stated that Columbia “need[s] to do more events with Rashid [Khalidi]” and why it “won’t be popular with some groups.” Who are the groups Khalidi would not be popular with and why?²⁰
- e. Please clarify the quote you referred to by the Head of Hillel and what you meant by stating “[w]e need to embrace people like him.”²¹ Who are “people like him”?
- f. Please clarify why you stated that you don’t think Shoshana Shendelman “should be on the board,” why you agreed that she was a “mole,” and what you meant by her “driving to campus and loading people into a [sic] SUV”?²²

Congress’s oversight powers are derived from the U.S. Constitution and have been repeatedly affirmed by the United States Supreme Court. Under House Rule X, the Committee’s legislative and oversight jurisdiction is broad, extending to “education . . . generally” and “laws, programs, and Government activities relating to domestic educational programs and institutions and programs of student assistance within the jurisdiction of other committees.”²³ This includes enforcement of Title VI and other antidiscrimination laws by the Department of Education. Further, as set forth in House Rule X, the Committee “shall review and study on a continuing basis the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of laws and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction.”²⁴ The information gathered will also aid the Committee in considering whether potential legislative changes, including legislation to specifically address antisemitic discrimination, are needed.

Should you have any questions please contact Jenna Berger at jenna.berger@mail.house.gov and Sarah Salas at sarah.salas@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Tim Walberg
Chairman
Committee on Education and Workforce

Elise M. Stefanik
Chairwoman
House Republican Leadership

Enclosures: Shipman Message I, II, III, IV, V.

¹⁸ Shipman Message II, *supra* note 9.

¹⁹ Shipman Message III, *supra* note 11.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² Shipman Message IV, *supra* note 15; Shipman Message V, *supra* note 16.

²³ RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 119th Cong. at 7, 10 (Jan. 16, 2025),

<https://rules.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/rules.house.gov/files/documents/houserules119thupdated.pdf>.

²⁴ RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 119th Cong., Rule X cl. 1(e)(6); cl. 2(b)(1)(A) (2025).

Short Message Report

Conversations: 1	Participants: 4
Total Messages: 4	Date Range: 10/30/2023

Outline of Conversations

 **Columbia Chairs** • 4 messages on 10/30/2023 • Claire Shipman <
David Greenwald PII <@s.whatsapp.net> • Minouche PII <
@s.whatsapp.net> •

Messages in chronological order (times are shown in GMT -04:00)



Columbia Chairs

Claire Shipman <[REDACTED]@s.whatsapp.net> 10/30/2023, 8:56 AM

Just a quick note from both of us to say we are getting a sense that the pressure in our alum community is building to a really difficult level. Had a long call with Jonathan Lavine last night and he is working hard on Henry Kravis and others but people are really frustrated and scared about antisemitism on our campus and they feel somehow betrayed by it. Which is not necessarily a rational feeling but it's deep and it is quite threatening. We both believe announcing a commission or task force on antisemitism as soon as possible (tomorrow?) with validating outsiders would be not only incredibly helpful, but at this point almost essential. It could funnel everybody's emotions that way, into something concrete and solutions oriented. The more we hear from people, including some members of our own board, which we did for most of the weekend, our conclusion is it's important to separate antisemitism—name that first—do something separate with that—and then tackle the other—even if it means for a day or two people are reacting to that. Attempting to blend this with anything else would, we believe, not just lessen the effectiveness but make matters worse.

You've probably seen the horrible stuff from Cornell—although it may be a small percentage of our students experiencing this it's deeply troubling and watching it all spread worldwide I think contributes to a legitimate fear about the rise of anti-semitism. And although, again, many on campus may be going about their business, we have to recognize the distress not only some of our students are feeling, but also our alum and outside family are feeling.

We have to take care of this community in a way that feels hopeful and very direct. And it would also take the pressure for all of this off of you. Moreover, it would actually be a useful and valid direction—quite consistent with our values and our role as a university.

Coincidentally (or not really because this is one of very few workable responses) Harvard announced the same. Penn plans a task force as well.

We just wanted you to know our thoughts and intel from the weekend.

Minouche <[REDACTED]@s.whatsapp.net> 10/30/2023, 11:52 AM

We have plans for a task force on antisemitism and Shailagh is checking with Nick Lemann if he will chair. We don't need to decide composition now but want to get announcement out by tomorrow.

Minouche <[REDACTED]@s.whatsapp.net> 10/30/2023, 11:59 AM

Shailagh will send you draft announcement today — grateful for quick feedback. We should think about group of trustees who can form a subcommittee that this group can work with.

Claire Shipman <[REDACTED]@s.whatsapp.net> 10/30/2023, 11:59 AM

Great. Great to move so quickly. Would be terrific to have an outside name for the announcement as well.

Short Message Report

Conversations: 1	Participants: 3
Total Messages: 1	Date Range: 1/17/2024

Outline of Conversations

... PII 1 message on 1/17/2024 • Claire Shipman • PII Mark Gollogly •
PII Womenomics Carney

Messages in chronological order



PII

M

Claire Shipman

1/17/2024, 10:57 AM

We need to get somebody from the middle east or who is Arab on our board. Quickly I think. Somehow.

Short Message Report

Conversations: 1	Participants: 2
Total Messages: 3	Date Range: 12/28/2023

Outline of Conversations

... Untitled • 3 messages on 12/28/2023 • PII PII Claire Shipman •
PII Minouche

Messages in chronological order



Untitled

#

PII

Claire Shipman

12/28/2023, 10:57 AM

The piece was pretty amazing given the moment. Headline terrific. Love all of the reminder about your extraordinary bio. Victor really pushed the political neutral point! The package as all in there and the Dean's letter. I think all things considered you and the university seem wise!

And most critically I think it heavily inoculates us for a while from the capital hill nonsense and threat. I spent a fair amount of time badgering her and refusing to be on the record unless she made her slant plain. In the end she said it was balanced but I didn't really believe her until I read it

I do think we should think about how to unsuspend the groups before semester starts to take the wind out of that.

And then how to do some things with Rashid. Events. That won't be popular in some groups but he is a respected academic.

Also. I loved the last quote from the head of Hillel. We need to embrace people like him.

Maybe the students can all unite in their hatred of us!

Hope holidays good.

>#

PII

Minouche

12/28/2023, 11:00 AM

As a friend of mine said, if everyone is mad at you than you are probably being fair! I do need to invest more time with students and faculty next term to get them to a better place. But thank you so much for your quote which helped a lot. It came out less bad than I feared and by current standards of university coverage I guess we could call a win....

>#

PII

Claire Shipman

12/28/2023, 11:11 AM

I know. What we think is a win has a low bar now. But honestly. You come across as kind of brilliant. And again—really like the political neutrality that comes through. And the deans really helped by backing you with the letter. It is a good take in the ground and might now let us focus on the other stuff.

Xo

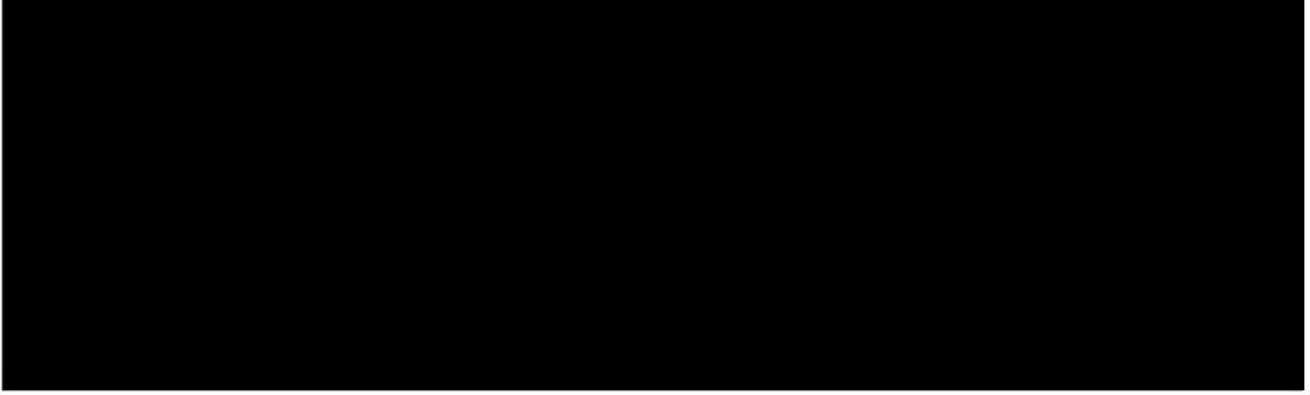
Short Message Report

Conversations: 1	Participants: 2
Total Messages: 11	Date Range: 1/25/2024

Outline of Conversations

... + **PII** 11 messages on 1/25/2024 ◦ < **PII** > Claire Shipman **PII** >

Messages in chronological order (times are shown in GMT -05:00)

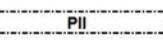
- [...] PII
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 8:05 AM
At some point you and I should meet with Lisa Carnoy. Take her out.
I know it's a crazy time. But would be wise likely.
- # [...] PII 1/25/2024, 9:08 AM
Agree
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:10 AM
Is that extreme or no?
- # [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:10 AM
What? Shoshana?
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:10 AM
Yes
- # [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:11 AM
She is extraordinarily unhelpful
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:12 AM
I just don't think she should be on the board. And like driving to campus and loading people into a suv. I just don't know.
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:14 AM
We also have to remember that this is going on. I got this from a SIPA student today.
Hi Claire,

- Best Regards,
[...] PII
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:14 AM
I will hear more useful from Brian I'm sure.
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:22 AM
The timeline was never before spring semester.
- CS Claire Shipman [...] PII 1/25/2024, 11:22 AM

Oy.

Short Message Report

Conversations: 1	Participants: 2
Total Messages: 20	Date Range: 4/22/2024

Outline of Conversations

 Untitled • 20 messages on 4/22/2024 •  Claire Shipman • Greene, Wanda

Messages in chronological order

- Untitled
- CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 7:48 AM
Are u on the board call today?
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 9:52 AM
Good morning. Yes, [REDACTED]
I might be off camera. How can I help?
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 9:58 AM
I'm sure there will be some contentious debate. I think that Victor and some people would like to already be bringing police back in. I think that the administration wants to make a good faith effort to attempt to solve this in a way that doesn't force us to lose all of the faculty. And I think we have to be aware of Shoshana.
according to Victor she wasn't happy with m statement last night and has been. I think she had a conversation with Abby that makes it sound as though she was fishing for information to be able to paint the board as being ready to support this strategy to some extent and defend will be useful but I think we should all be mindful that anything we say could be passed on by Shoshana
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 9:58 AM
Sorry about [REDACTED]
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 9:59 AM
Do you believe that she is a mole?
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 9:59 AM
A fox in the henhouse?
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 9:59 AM
I do
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 10:00 AM
But we can't really do anything today I think
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 10:08 AM
I don't know why we have continued to tolerate her. She has driven me nuts since last fall.
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 10:09 AM
She has gone from disrespectful to dangerous. I am so sorry.
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 10:32 AM
Jeh is deeply credible and brilliant. A very important resource for us.
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 10:35 AM
Yes. We talked this am
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 10:35 AM
He has been great
- > CS [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 11:12 AM
Oy
- > WG Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 11:12 AM
Indeed

- > **WG** Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 11:12 AM
I am tired of her.
- > **CS** [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 11:12 AM
So so tired
- > **WG** Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 11:13 AM
I am totally empathetic. But we need trustee hats on, not parent hats.
- > **CS** [REDACTED] Claire Shipman 4/22/2024, 11:14 AM
Yes
- > **WG** Greene, Wanda 4/22/2024, 11:21 AM
Officers meeting after this?